

Contact:  
Public Relations Department  
San Francisco Symphony  
(415) 503-5474  
[publicrelations@sfsymphony.org](mailto:publicrelations@sfsymphony.org)  
[www.sfsymphony.org/press](http://www.sfsymphony.org/press)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** / January 9, 2013



Photos of Mei-Ann Chen, George Gao and the SFS's Lunar New Year festivities can be viewed and downloaded [here](#)

**THE SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY PRESENTS ITS  
ANNUAL LUNAR NEW YEAR CONCERT & CELEBRATION  
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2 IN DAVIES SYMPHONY HALL**

**Conductor Mei-Ann Chen leads the Orchestra in a program  
of works by Asian and Asian-American composers**

**Concert features guest soloist George Gao on the *erhu*, a traditional Chinese two-stringed fiddle**

**Festival Reception with lion dancers, arts and crafts, and refreshments  
precedes concert**

**Elegant Imperial Dinner held after concert in City Hall Rotunda**

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA, January 9, 2013** – The [San Francisco Symphony](#) (SFS) rings in the Lunar New Year and the Year of the Snake on Saturday, February 2 at its [13<sup>th</sup> Annual Lunar New Year Concert and Celebration](#) in Davies Symphony Hall. The celebrations begin with a Festival Reception at 3:00pm, followed by the 4:00pm Orchestra concert featuring conductor Mei-Ann Chen and *erhu* player George Gao in a program consisting entirely of music by Asian and Asian-American composers. The day concludes with the Lunar New Year Imperial Dinner in the Grand Rotunda of City Hall.

The pre-concert festivities in the Davies Symphony Hall lobbies provide family-friendly entertainment and activities, including children's arts and crafts, lion dancing and Chinese calligraphy, as well as complimentary food, desserts and tea bars.

The 4:00pm concert, led by Taiwanese conductor Mei-Ann Chen in her SFS debut, celebrates the Lunar New Year and San Francisco's unique cultural fabric by featuring a combination of traditional Asian music alongside orchestral works composed by Asian and Asian-American composers. The program

features *erhu* player George Gao performing Cheng Gang and He Zhang-Hao's *The Butterfly Lovers* Concerto, a work based on an ancient legend of the same name, and one of the most famous Chinese orchestral pieces. Originally written for violin and orchestra, *The Butterfly Lovers* Concerto can also be performed with traditional Chinese instruments such as the *erhu*. An *erhu* is a two-stringed bowed instrument, which may also be called a "Chinese two-stringed fiddle." A versatile instrument, the *erhu* is used in traditional music as well as in contemporary settings such as in pop, rock and jazz. Works by two Taiwanese composers are featured: *An Angel from Formosa* by Tyzen Hsiao, who is often referred to as 'Taiwan's Rachmaninoff'; and Kao Shan Ching's *Ali Mountain Evergreen. Saibei Dance* by An-Lun Huang, and the traditional *Lion Dance* and *Good News from Beijing Reaches Border Villages* are also included on the program.

The elegant Lunar New Year Imperial Dinner, inspired by the rich visual pageantry of traditional New Year celebrations, is at 6:00pm in City Hall's Grand Rotunda. Tickets for the Imperial Dinner are sold separately. The Lunar New Year Celebration is chaired by Mindy Sun and is made possible by the generous support of Presenting Partner HSBC Premier.

February 10, 2013 begins the Year of the Snake. Occupying the 6th position in the Chinese Zodiac, the Snake is the most enigmatic of the twelve zodiac animals. Those born under the sign of the Snake are elegant and enjoy reading, listening to great music, tasting delicious food, and going to the theater. They are fascinated with all beautiful things in life. A person born in the year of the Snake acts according to his or her own judgment, and doesn't follow the views of others. Those born in 2001, 1989, 1977, 1965, 1953, 1941, 1929 and 1917 were born under the sign of the Snake.

[Mei-Ann Chen](#) makes her San Francisco Symphony debut in this performance. She is currently in her third year as Music Director of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra. She is also beginning her second season as Music Director of the Chicago Sinfonietta. In 2012, the League of American Orchestras chose her for the prestigious Helen M. Thompson Award at their national conference in Dallas. The first woman to win the Malko Competition (2005), Chen has served as Assistant Conductor of the Atlanta, Baltimore and Oregon symphonies. Born in Taiwan, Mei-Ann Chen has lived in the United States since 1989. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in conducting from the University of Michigan, where she was a student of Kenneth Kiesler. Prior to that, she was the first student in New England Conservatory's history to receive master's degrees, simultaneously, in both violin and conducting.

Hailed as one of the most innovative and respected *erhu* masters today, [George Gao](#) began playing the *erhu* at the age of six. He studied at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. He has toured extensively and has been featured as a soloist with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, Taiwan National Chinese Orchestra, National Arts Center Orchestra, and I Musici, among many others. George Gao has also performed recitals at the Glenn Gould Studio, the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, City Hall Concert Hall in Hong Kong, and Taipei's National Concert Hall. An enthusiast of many musical styles, Gao has pioneered the development of new music for the *erhu*, fusing traditional Chinese music with jazz, Western classical music, new age, and other ethnic music from different world cultures. George Gao has composed music for many films and documentaries. In 2006, Gao co-composed and recorded the soundtrack for the Oscar-winning short documentary *The Blood of Yingzhou District*. In 2010, *The Warriors of Qiugang*, another short documentary for which Gao co-composed and recorded music, was also nominated for an Oscar.

#### **FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

#### **San Francisco Symphony 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Lunar New Year Concert & Celebration**

Davies Symphony Hall  
201 Van Ness Avenue  
San Francisco, CA

**Saturday, February 2, 2013**

3:00pm – Festival Reception

4:00pm – Lunar New Year Concert

6:00pm – Imperial Dinner (**at City Hall; tickets sold separately**)

**Mei-Ann Chen** conductor

**George Gao** *erhu* (Chinese two-stringed fiddle)

**San Francisco Symphony**

**Traditional** *Lion Dance*

**Traditional** *Good News from Beijing Reaches Border Villages*

**Tyzen Hsiao** *An Angel from Formosa*

**An-Lun Huang** *Saibei Dance*

**Kao Shan Ching** *Ali Mountain Evergreen*

**Cheng Gang/He Zhang-Hao** *The Butterfly Lovers Concerto*

The [San Francisco Symphony](#) rings in the Lunar New Year and the Year of the Snake on Saturday, February 2 at its [13<sup>th</sup> Annual Lunar New Year Concert and Celebration](#) in Davies Symphony Hall. The celebrations begin with a Festival Reception for all ticketholders at 3:00pm. The pre-concert festivities in the Davies Symphony Hall lobbies provide family-friendly entertainment and activities, including children's arts and crafts, lion dancing and Chinese calligraphy, as well as complimentary food, desserts and tea bars. The 4:00pm concert celebrates the Lunar New Year and San Francisco's unique cultural fabric by featuring a combination of traditional Asian music alongside orchestral works composed by Asian and Asian-American composers. The elegant Lunar New Year Imperial Dinner, inspired by the rich visual pageantry of traditional New Year celebrations, is at 6:00pm in City Hall's Grand Rotunda. Tickets for the Imperial Dinner are sold separately.

**TICKETS:** Tickets for the Lunar New Year concert and the pre-concert Festival Reception are \$25-\$72 and are available through [sfsymphony.org](http://sfsymphony.org), by phone at (415) 864-6000, or at the [Davies Symphony Hall Box Office](#) on Grove Street between Van Ness Avenue and Franklin Street. Individual tickets for the post-concert Imperial Dinner at San Francisco's City Hall are \$350-\$1000 and are available by calling the SFS Volunteer Council at (415) 503-5500.



*The 2013 Chinese New Year Celebration is made possible through the generosity of Presenting Partner HSBC Premier.*

*Additional support is provided by the San Francisco Arts Commission.*

*Emirates is the Official Airline of the San Francisco Symphony.*

*William Hill® Estate Winery is the Official Wine of the San Francisco Symphony.*

*San Francisco Chronicle/SfGate.com is the Official Media Partner of the San Francisco Symphony.*

*Special thanks to our media partners San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency and KTSF Channel 26 Television.*